

Hawaii MARINE

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2/3 honors fallen brother

Sgt. Robert M. Storm
Combat Correspondent

CAMP BLESSING, NANGALAM, Afghanistan — Marines and Sailors of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, honored one of their fallen brothers in a memorial ceremony at Camp Blessing in Konar Province, Afghanistan on Sept. 29.



VALDEZ

Lance Cpl. Stephen A. Valdez, machinegunner, from Bebe, Ark., died on Sep. 26 as a result of enemy mortar fire.

Valdez graduated from Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego on June 2, 2004. After completing training at School of Infantry, he reported to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.

Valdez deployed with 2/3 to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom earlier this year.

"He was a lifer (referring to his desire to stay in the Marine Corps until retirement). He knew this was what he wanted to do," said Lance Cpl. Brandon S. Rall, machinegunner, from Worthington, Minn. "He loved the Marine Corps, and he loved the infantry."

Friends of Valdez remember him as an outgoing, confident young man who showed intense focus on whatever task was at hand. He liked to workout and play all types of sports, especially football and had hoped to one day play for the Marine Corps football team.

"He was good at everything he did. No matter what it was he was doing, he gave it every-



Sgt. Robert M. Storm

Marines from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment at Camp Blessing, Afghanistan, give a last salute to Lance Cpl. Steven A. Valdez who died on Sep. 26 from enemy mortar fire. Blessing is the most remote manned Marine Corps post in Afghanistan and constantly receives enemy fire.

thing he had. Besides being a workout fanatic, he was also a video-game fanatic. He loved to play NCAA 2006," said Pfc. Michael D. Scholl, machinegunner, from Lincoln, Neb.

Members of his squad and other friends talk with admiration about the way he took pride in being a Marine — how he always bragged about

his brother and cousin who were Marines. He talked a lot about his family, friends and girlfriend from back home. They were all very important to him, according to those that knew him. He is also remembered as a Marine who accomplished the missions given to him, no matter what the difficulties.

"Unfortunately, we've done this a few times, but the Marines conduct themselves in a professional manner, they take their time to mourn and carry on with the mission at hand — the same way Valdez would do," said 1st Lt. Matt D. Bartels, camp officer-in-charge, from Minneapolis, Minn.

MP honored for crime prevention



Lance Cpl. R. Drew Hendricks

Sgt. Nathan J. DeWeerd (left), McGruff the Crime Dog and Lt. Gov. James R. "Duke" Aiona Jr. stand together after DeWeerd was recognized for his services to the McGruff program, Sept. 27.

Lance Cpl. R. Drew Hendricks
U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific

HONOLULU — Hawaii Lt. Gov. James R. "Duke" Aiona Jr. signed a proclamation commemorating Crime Prevention Month October 2005 and McGruff's 25th Anniversary in Crime Prevention, Sept. 27.

McGruff the Crime Dog, along with programs like Drug Abuse Resistance Education and Drug Education for Youth, have been molding the young minds of America's youth for many years.

"Programs like the McGruff Truck are a great asset to crime prevention," said Aiona. "I know, I'm preaching to the choir, because you are the ones who are working to keep this state safe and who have dedicated your time and efforts to teaching others

how to do their part."

For Sgt. Nathan J. DeWeerd, who was recognized for his services to the McGruff program, the best way to teach people about crime prevention is to get them while they're young.

DeWeerd, a military policeman at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, does his part by teaching children as a D.A.R.E. instructor and a DEFY mentor.

"The biggest reason we do the D.A.R.E. program, and others like it, is to help children make better decisions, not just how to say no to drugs," said DeWeerd, who teaches D.A.R.E. to third- and fifth-grade students.

The curriculums of these programs show children the effects of poor

See CRIME, A-6

Report of abducted Marines found to be false

Press Release

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Multinational Force Iraq officials today called claims "patently false" by al Qaeda in Iraq that two U.S. Marines were kidnapped in western Iraq.

All Marines and service members attached to Multinational Force West are accounted for, officials said in a statement. It comes in response to al Qaeda claims made Saturday on a Web site used by the terror group.

The al Qaeda claim reportedly appeared on one of Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Web sites. The group claimed to have kidnapped two Marines and were demanding the release of all female Sunni Muslim prisoners, according to news sources.

This latest claim by the terror organization continues a pattern of deceit, officials said. They added the hoax demonstrates al Qaeda's willingness and desire to use the media to propagate its lies.

The kidnapping claim came during Operation Kabda Bil Hadid, or "Iron Fist," in the western part of the country near the Syrian border. About 1,000 Marines, soldiers and Sailors from Regimental Combat Team 2 began engaging al Qaeda in Iraq terrorists west of Sadah, Saturday.

Iron Fist, part of the larger Operation Sayaid, or "Hunter," is designed to keep al Qaeda terrorists in Iraq from operating freely in the Euphrates River Valley. It is also meant to prevent terrorists from influencing the local population through murder and intimidation, officials said.

(Based on a Multinational Force Iraq news release.)

1/3 begins Mojave Viper training exercise

Sgt. Joe Lindsay
Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER, TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — Marines are renowned for their history of serving in "every clime and place," so it arguably came as little surprise to the 900-plus Lava Dogs from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, that they went from tropical Hawaii into the freezing cold in Bridgeport, Calif., at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center; and now are under the scorching sun and 100-plus degree temperatures in the desert at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif. — all in the span of 15 days.

A lifetime.

"This is our best last chance to prepare for combat in Afghanistan," said 1/3 Commanding Officer Lt. Col. James Bierman, from Virginia, as he addressed the entire battalion during a formation, Sept. 29, here at Camp Wilson. "We have come a long way in a lot of critical areas, but there is still work to be done.

"The way we train here will have a direct impact on the way we fight in Afghanistan. I expect one hundred fifty percent from each and every one of you."

And so the stage was set as 1/3 embarked on what promises to be a grueling four-week, live-fire training exercise dubbed Mojave Viper, also known as the Combined Arms Training Course, a recent name redesignation, which replaces the old Combined Arms Exercise.

"Mojave Viper gives us a chance to do combined-arms training — everything from small arms to our largest organic weapons, coupled with air integra-



Lance Cpl. Stephen Kwietniak

Pfc. Alex Napolez (left), a wireman assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Bridgeport, Pa., and Pfc. Denton Gladden, a field radio operator from New York, fill sandbags in preparation for Exercise Mojave Viper at Camp Wilson, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif. The Marines of 1/3 have been training at Twentynine Palms in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

tion," explained Capt. Jer Garcia, 1/3 assistant operations officer and a native of Honolulu. "During this exercise, we will employ the escalation of live-force fires all the way to the more traditional combined-arms fires.

"By the end of this evolution, the Marines will

understand that they can cause death and destruction to the enemy from not only their personal small arms, but also from larger weapon systems — artillery or air strikes called in with precision to a fleeing

See 1/3, A-7

NEWS BRIEFS

Post Office to Close for Holiday

The MCB Hawaii Post Office will be closed on Saturday to Monday in observance of Columbus Day and will reopen 8 a.m. on Tuesday. The post offices in Kailua and Kaneohe will be open for Saturday service.

For more information, call the Base Post Office at 257-2008.

Main Gate Construction to Delay Traffic

There is construction being done at the Main Gate of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, that will restrict travel to one lane inbound and one lane outbound.

The construction will cause delays in traffic and is scheduled to last throughout the month of October.

All personnel with Department of Defense decals on their vehicles are encouraged to use the Mokapu gate in Kailua to access the base during peak traffic hours in the morning and afternoon.

Questions about the construction can be directed to Steve Butala at 257-2727, ext. 258. For questions after working hours, call 257-8467.

Volunteers Needed to Paint Kailua Library

The Kailua Library staff is requesting Marine Corps volunteers to help re-paint the exterior of the library in downtown Kailua. A painting day has been set for Thursday, beginning at 8 a.m.

The library is located at 239 Kuulei Road between Kailua Elementary School and the Kailua Police Station. Paint, materials, food, water and sodas will all be provided.

Volunteers must contact Sandra Akana, the Kailua librarian, at 266-9914, ext. 0.

Hawaii Marine Accepts Letters

The Hawaii Marine welcomes comments for the "Letters to the Editor" section. Letters should be clear and concise. The Hawaii Marine staff reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and length. Comments must be signed with a full name and a telephone number must be provided.

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L.A. Lakers Extend Appreciation to Military on Oahu

The National Basketball Association's Los Angeles Lakers are holding training camp in Honolulu this month and will play two pre-season exhibition games Tuesday and Wednesday, against the Golden State Warriors at the University of Hawaii, Manoa campus.

Prior to Tuesday's game, there will be a special pre-game presentation recognizing all five branches of the military on the island of Oahu. Each branch will have one representative on the court.

Sgt. Gary Goss, advisor/instructor, Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academy; and Lance Cpl. Joshua C. Rowell, CAAT Platoon, Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, will represent the Marine Corps Tuesday in the Lakers' special pre-game.

Game time for both games at the Stan Sheriff Center will be 7 p.m.

For ticket information, call Stan Sheriff Center ticket office at 956-4481, Ticket Sales Hotline at 944-2697, or visit www.e-tickethawaii.com. Lower level exhibition game tickets are \$80; upper level tickets are \$10 to \$35.

Look for coverage of the pre-game presentation and the game in next week's Hawaii Marine.

HI 5¢ Redemption Site Available

HI 5¢ redemption services are available from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m every Friday in the parking lot across from the PX Annex. Separate glass, cans and plastic and remove lids before redeeming recyclables.

For more information, call Jim Sibert, Base Recycling at 257-4300.

Payday advance loans hurt more than help

Sgt. Danielle M. Bacon
U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific

CAMP H.M. SMITH, Hawaii — It is a week until payday, and Lance Cpl. Joe Schmoe has found himself between a rock and a hard place. He's spent the last of his money, but hasn't filled his car up with gas to get back and forth to work.

No need to fear, on fumes he coasts into the local payday advance lender. What he doesn't know is the \$100 he just borrowed is coming at an extremely high price.

If he borrows \$100, it comes out a \$10 fee and pays it back in a day, it comes out to a 3,650 percent annual rate, according to the APR schedule. The APR schedule calculates rates based on 365 days, amount advanced and total fees.

Most cash advances take the money out of your account on payday. In this case, that would make the \$100 loan have a 521.43 percent APR over a seven-day period, according to the APR schedule.

"It is quick, easy money. There is no need for credit, because they have your post-dated check," said Paul Velanger, director of Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, Pearl Harbor. "They know they will get their money."

The real problem lies beneath the surface. "They aren't addressing the real problem when they use payday advances," said Ed Josiah, a Personal Financial Management Counselor at Marine Corps Base, Hawaii. "They are addressing the symptom."

Both Velanger and Josiah agree payday advances become a vicious cycle.

"They get the loan, but don't address what is causing the problem, and then they have to do it all over again next payday," said Josiah. "They don't understand the cost of ownership."

"They may think that they can make a three-hundred dollar car payment, but they don't think about the costs of owning that car," he added. "They don't account for insurance, gas and registration."

Josiah goes on to explain that Marines should really take a look at what they are spending their money on. He gave percentages to help Marines take a look at their spending.

"At a minimum, they should put ten percent into savings. Marines shouldn't spend more than seventy percent on living expenses," said Josiah. "Living expenses should include food, shelter, transportation, child care and utilities."

He then went on to explain what limits Marines should set for their credit spending.

"They shouldn't spend more than twenty percent on their credit debt. If they are, they should really take a look at what they have," said Josiah. "Often, they use the credit card the same as a payday advance. They use it to fill the gap."

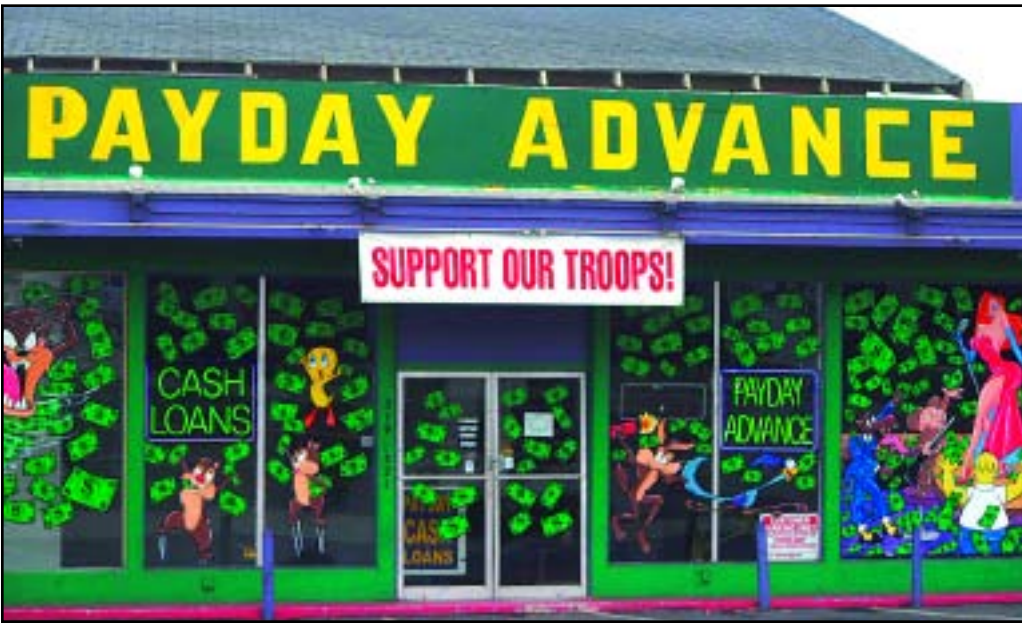
"Their credit cards end up being a crutch," He added. "They should really come by my office or seek financial services."

Free services are afforded at both NMCRS and the Marine Corps Community Services,

Blood Drive

The Kaneohe Officers' Spouses' Club, along with the All Enlisted Spouses' Club, are sponsoring a "Blood Drive for the Troops" on Tuesday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Lanai Room at The Officers' Club, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

For more information, call 254-2656.



Lance Cpl. Renee Krusemark

Payday lenders, like this one outside the gates of Camp Pendleton, Calif., can get service members into financial trouble by charging high fees.

Personal Financial Management Program.

"We are not here to tell someone how to live," said Josiah. "We point out areas of concern. We are here to give them advice and the tools necessary to get out of debt. If they need more extensive help, we can refer them to credible agencies."

Josiah warns Marines thinking about going online to fix their debt.

"They don't know who is on the other side of the screen. They prey on those who are desperate," Josiah said.

Velanger added, "Online lenders are the same ball game as payday advance. They

average three hundred to five-hundred percent."

"Whether Marines are in financial trouble or not we encourage them to set a budget," said Velanger.

He added, "Not only do we offer counseling for service members in time of need, we do budget counseling and also baby budgeting for expecting parents."

For more information or to sign up for a class call the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, Pearl Harbor at 423-1314, MCB Hawaii at 254-1327 or Personal Financial Management Program at 257-7783.

Go to guy



Pfc. Edward C. deBree

Russ Shimabuku, 36, a construction worker for Goto Construction, chisels away at the concrete to prepare to install the new hydraulic barriers, Monday, at the main gate aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. The hydraulic barriers will be used by the gate guards at the main gate to stop anyone who tries to drive pass the main gate without proper clearance.

Hawaii MARINE

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Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — mostly cloudy skies become partly cloudy by early afternoon; easterly winds, 10 to 12 mph, gusting to 18 mph; isolated showers in the early morning.

Night — partly cloudy with temporary, mostly cloudy conditions during the early morning; winds to decrease slightly to 8 to 10 mph, gusting to 16 mph; some isolated showers throughout the night and early morning.

High — 84 Low — 76

Saturday



Day — partly to mostly cloudy skies throughout the day; easterly winds, 10-12 mph, gusting to 20 mph; few showers during morning

Night — partly cloudy skies; easterly winds remain at 8 to 10 mph, gusting to 16 mph

High — 84 Low — 76

Sunday



Day — partly to mostly cloudy skies with isolated morning showers; easterly winds, 10 to 12 mph, gusting to 18 mph

Night — partly cloudy becoming mostly cloudy overnight; isolated showers during early morning; northeasterly to easterly winds, 8 to 10 mph, gusting to 16 mph

High — 84 Low — 76



TRAINED SNIPER

Editor's Note: This is part one of a six-part series about the vigorous training endured by Marines from units throughout the Corps who are undergoing a 10-week Scout Sniper Basic Course. All of the student Marines in this course are experts on the M-16A2. Continue to follow these Marines through their training next week as "On Point" (Page D-1) brings you more of their training in part two.

**Story and Photos By
Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson**
Combat Correspondent

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii — Imagine, lying in a field, bugs crawling on your face, sweat dripping over your eyes, and only being able to crawl a few inches at a time. Then, once you get to your desired position, you have to wait for the perfect opportunity to take that one perfect shot. Marines attending the Scout Sniper Basic Course will endure 10 weeks of training in order to obtain the discipline and skills that they will need to handle a situation like

this. "We started the course on August twenty-first with twenty-eight Marines from six different units. It's a unique class because we have students from First Battalion, Third Marine Regiment; Third Battalion, Third Marine Regiment and Fourth Force Recon all being from Hawaii. We also have Marines from First Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment; Second Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment and Third Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment — all out of Camp Pendleton, California, " said Sgt. Michael A. McClay, chief instructor, Scout Sniper Basic Course, Regimental Schools. "We now have twenty-seven students because one requested to be dropped, so the students we have left today will be shooting the known-distance course of fire with distances ranging from one hundred to one thousand yards. So far, since we've been out here we've covered land navigation training, calling for indi-

rect fire, and sniper employment." In the weeks to come, these Marines will also be doing another known-distance course, an unknown distance course, individual stalking, group stalking, and will undergo a weeklong field-training exercise. "The stalking will be interesting because the students are trying to stalk us instructors," said McClay, a West Palm Beach, Fla. native. "Once the students get within four hundred yards of us, they have to take a shot, obviously with a blank in their rifle, because they'll be aiming at us." McClay compared the stalk to playing hide-and-go-seek with a set of binoculars, which makes it difficult for the stalker to not be seen. "It's tough to say what the most difficult section of the training will be, it really depends on the individual," said McClay. "For some students, the known distance and marksmanship sections are the hardest parts. The weather can make that very difficult, if it's not good conditions." According to Cpl. Brandon Wittwer, rifleman, Weapons Platoon, 3/3, the entire course is challenging and something new is taught to the students, every day.

See SNIPER, A-4

A Marine gets ready to squeeze the trigger during the Scout Sniper Basic Course's known-distance course, Sept. 29, at Schofield Barracks.



Above — Cpl. Brandon Wittwer, rifleman with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment reviews his data book before a day of shooting the M-40A3 sniper rifle. The Marines in the Scout Sniper Basic Course will be shooting at distances ranging from 100 to 1,000 yards and must qualify the following day. Right — Scout Sniper Basic Course instructors sit behind a scope to spot their Marines' shots during the known-distance course, Sept. 29.



Marines in the Scout Sniper Basic Course lay at the firing line and shoot at targets at distances of 1,000 yards. The Marines must satisfactorily complete the 10-week course in order to qualify as a "Sniper."

On the skyline ... with 1/3

by Sgt. Joe Lindsay

On the Skyline is a weekly column written by Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Combat Correspondent Sgt. Joe Lindsay. Lindsay is currently deployed with the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment to

Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., where 1/3 is undergoing training to prepare them for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Junior Marine is experienced beyond what rank implies

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER, TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. —

The shrapnel burning in his legs most likely came from a hand grenade, he figured, considering the fighting was so up close and personal that day in Fallujah. He couldn't really be sure. It might have been from an rocket-propelled grenade, mortar, or who knows what other kind of homemade bomb some insurgent had put together in his basement. The media and military called these tools of death improvised explosive devices, but it didn't really matter to him what label they were given or even what exactly it was imbedded inside of him, piercing his flesh.

All that mattered was that he stayed with his men and continued the fight.

Thus began the story of Lance Cpl. Justin Snyder, 21 at the time, and just barely old enough to have a beer. He was squad automatic weapons operator with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, and he was in the most fierce close-quarters battle that the Marine Corps had faced since Hue City in Vietnam almost 40 years ago.

Hawaii seemed a far away place. His home and family in Las Vegas, further still. While other American youths his age were paying money to have pieces of ornately designed shiny metal stuck through their noses, tongues, and belly buttons as the latest youth rite of passage back in states, Snyder was getting paid to have rusty metal fragments tear through his flesh in a far different rite of passage that Marines have been experiencing since 1775.

"I'd always run my mouth about, 'If you're



Lance Cpl. Stephen Kwietniak

Lance Cpl. Justin Snyder, a fire-team leader assigned to Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Las Vegas, who was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds he sustained in Fallujah, Iraq, poses with an M203 grenade launcher attached to his M-16A2 service rifle. In the background stand the makeshift barracks 1/3 is using during their deployment to Camp Wilson, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., for a combined-arms exercise.

an able-bodied young American, then you should join some branch of the service," said Snyder, a fire-team leader with Charlie Company, 3rd Platoon, as he sat with an M203 grenade launcher attached to his M-16A2 service rifle in the frigid high desert of Hawthorne,

Nev., during a recent training exercise as 1/3 gears up for yet another combat deployment, this time to Afghanistan. "Basically, I was all talk, so I decided to put my money where my mouth is, and here I sit. That's that."

Sometimes, though, that isn't always merely

that.

"I'm not sure Lance Corporal Snyder truly understands the impact and importance he has to not only his squad and platoon, but also to his company, his battalion and to the entire Marine Corps as a whole," said 1st Sgt. Gerard Calvin, first sergeant, Charlie Company, 1/3, and a native of Richmond, Va. "He is a 'Been there; done that; got the T-shirt Marine,' and just watching the way other Marines gravitate to him speaks volumes for the respect he commands just by his presence."

According to Calvin, even though Snyder's rank of lance corporal may be considered a junior rank, there is nothing junior about this Marine.

"Circumstances have turned him into a seasoned vet," said Calvin, who is preparing to make his third combat tour to Afghanistan. "You can see the intensity and confidence in his eyes, and the Marines around him are drawn to that. Even as a lance corporal, he is a proven leader of Marines. Any leader worth his salt, and I don't care what their rank is or how long they've been in the Corps, can learn from Marines like Lance Corporal Snyder."

Gunnery Sgt. Paul Davis, company gunnery sergeant for Charlie Company and an Iraq veteran said he couldn't agree more.

"Lance Corporal Snyder knows what the unknown is like," said the Laurens, S.C. native. "On its face, that statement might not seem to make sense, but believe me, to those who have been under fire, it does. He has proven that he will keep attacking with rounds whizzing by

See SKYLINE, A-8

Inspired

Staff Sgt. Jack Johnson, career planner, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, stands in front of a formation with 13 Marines who reenlisted in a ceremony at the Iwo Jima Memorial, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Monday. Johnson was paramount in the organization of the ceremony and was responsible for helping more than a dozen other Marines make the decision to reenlist as well as 128 Marines making the choice to extend and deploy with 3/3 to Iraq. For more on Johnson, see the full story on B-3.

Pfc. Edward C. deBree



SNIPER, From A-3

McClay explained how the shooters' spotter can have just as big of an effect on whether or not the shooter hits his mark.

"It's really a team evolution," said 25-year-old McClay. "Everyone has to help everyone — especially when it's time for the Marines to do the group stalking section of the training. It will take all the Marines to work together for them to pass.

"One thing that makes it difficult for the students, is the fact that there isn't a one thousand-yard range near. It would be very beneficial to the students if they had one, but I don't see one being built anytime soon," he said.

McClay said the chances that everyone who is in the class will pass are slim, and having all the students pass rarely happens.

"The class is scheduled to graduate November eighth," said McClay. "We look to pass everyone in the class, but it's rare that it's going to happen. We've got a lot left to go through and a short amount of time to get it done."

Injured Marines do final good deed

War veterans help out at school before leaving the Corps

Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Press Chief

When Marines return from combat, wounded, they are usually given an option of how they want to finish out their time in the Corps. Some choose to be a lifeguard at the base pool, others spend their time as range coaches, but for five Marines from Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, the choice was one that has changed their outlook on life, as well as the people they work with.

“This is definitely the best thing I have volunteered for in the Marine Corps,” said Lance Cpl. Bryan C. Bordog, mortarman, 3rd Marine Regiment. “It is nice to escape military life for awhile and give back to the community.”

Bordog and the other volunteers spend five days a week tutoring children, acting as monitors, assisting the teachers, and serving as coaches for after-school basketball teams at Mokapu Elementary School.

“It is great to see that the kids are actually learning the mechanics of the game,” said Larry D. Biggs, principal, Mokapu Elementary School. “We hope to be able to introduce other sports in the future, because basketball has gone so well for the kids.”

Biggs explained the Adopt-A-School Program really took flight after Lt. Col. Owen R. Lovejoy, executive officer, 3rd Marine Regiment, spoke to him and said he was interested in sending wounded Marines over to the school to assist the students.

“We had a chance to go meet the Marines before they came to work at the school, and we were very pleased,” said Biggs, a Des Moines, Iowa native. “Several of the volunteers have expressed that they are interested in pursuing a teaching career, once they get out of the Corps. I think this is a great thing for them to experience.”

Biggs also stressed the fact that activities, such as basketball, have never been available before due to lack of manpower.

“It is great to have these guys out here interacting with the kids during and after class,” he said.

According to Arianna A. Le, parent community network center facilitator, Mokapu Elementary School, the students really look up to the Marines as role models. Especially because a lot of the children have parents who are deployed.

“Most children have a mother or father who is not around right now because of a deployment,” she explained. “The children see these guys as people to look up to and open up to.”

Since coming to work full time at the school one year ago, Le said she has never seen this extent of interaction between Marines and students through the Adopt-A-School Program, and admitted it is a wonderful thing to see.

“Seeing the way the kids interact with the Marines is a great thing to witness,” said the Alexandria, Va. native. “I think it is beneficial for both the Marines and students to be in this kind of environment. I hope, in the future, we can continue to have this type of support.”

Many of the volunteers, since they are leaving the Corps soon, agree that this job is a great way to slowly reintroduce them to the civilian environment.

“It is a nice change,” said Bordog, a San Jose, Calif. native. “I think it will help me adjust to getting back into the swing of things in the civilian world.”

Bordog said he sees children in his future — but not for a long time. He does believe that some of the things he is experiencing will help him later on in life.

“I think it’s going to benefit me, down the road, when I do decide to have children,” he said. “I am witnessing different behaviors at certain ages, and learning how to react to the children in a positive way. I have learned that it takes a lot of patience.”

According to Lance Cpl. Joaquin M. McCurdy, squad automatic weapons gunner, 3rd Marine Regiment, since he has recently become a father, the experiences he is involved with at the school are things he can carry over once his 10-month-old daughter gets older.

“I have had experience before, teaching and interacting with kids as a volunteer for

the Boys and Girls Club,” explained McCurdy, “But every day brings new knowledge that I can carry with me as a parent.”

McCurdy serves as a crossing guard each morning, which was a position that was hard to fill until he came along. He also frequently takes full charge of the physical education class in order to give the teacher a break from work and to gain more one-on-one time with the students.

“I really enjoy working with the kids. I’m a very family oriented person. That’s how I grew up, and I am kinda protective of the children because of that,” admitted the Mescalero, Apache Reservation, N.M. native. “I am leaving the Corps very soon, and it will be hard to leave these kids and move on, because they get attached and so do we.”

Another benefit of having the Marines volunteering after school as basketball coaches is the fact that some parents get a little extra time to themselves after a long day of work.

“I think, as a parent, especially in the Marine Corp or Navy, that I could use an hour or so after work to relax before my child came home from school,” said Bordog. “It also tires the kids out, and they probably sleep better. So while we’re having fun with the kids, we’re also helping the parents. It is a win-win

situation.”

The Marines work together with students that range in age from kindergartners to sixth graders. They work with them on a daily basis, and some of the volunteer Marines said they are surprised at the level of trust and respect the young students have for them.

“The kids look up to you a lot,” said Lance Cpl. Jonathan M. Linhart, a Milwaukee, Wis. native. “I have heard them say things like, ‘Oh you’re a Marine — like my daddy,’ and it makes you realize the impact that you have on the children, and it means a lot.”

Another note Linhart took while being involved in the Adopt-A-School Program was how hard the teachers worked each day.

“There is a lot to say about the students of course,” said Linhart, 20, “but another thing I realized is that the teachers have a tough job, and they have to have a lot of patience and kindness in order to get what they need to get done. I have gained a lot of respect for the teachers and staff, and I hope that other Marines will also get the opportunity to experience what the five of us have. It has been great.”



Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

A fifth grader from Mokapu Elementary School runs for the ball during a basketball practice, Sept. 29, while Lance Cpl. Joaquin McCurdy, squad automatic weapons gunner, 3rd Marine Regiment, passes the ball to him. McCurdy, along with four other volunteers, are spending their last days in the Marine Corps tutoring students, assisting teachers and acting as monitors, and taking their extra energy to the court to teach fifth and sixth graders the game of basketball. From fundamentals to tricks of the trade, the athletes spend more than an hour on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays practicing and learning with the Marines.

‘Easy Riders’ deploy aboard ship

Press Release

Helicopter Anti-Submarine Light Squadron 37

Helicopter Anti-Submarine Light Squadron 37, commanded by Cmdr. Patrick Molenda, formed and trained Detachment Four for embarkation aboard USS Chosin (CG 65) where it will support Expeditionary Strike Group One during its current deployment.

Chosin, a guided-missile cruiser homeported in Pearl Harbor, provides the ESG with robust air, surface and subsurface offensive and defensive capabilities. The combination of Chosin’s organic sensors in concert with the capabilities of the detachment’s SH-60B helicopters provides the ESG commander with enhanced capabilities to effectively counter air, surface, and subsurface threats not normally found in a traditional Amphibious Ready Group.

Combined exercises began in April with a training period known as ESG Integration. As part of this exercise, Detachment Four embarked on Chosin for the first time and conducted the ship-air team training commonly referred to as Week One Work Ups. This unit-level training is designed to train both ship’s company and the embarked air department in all facets of helicopter operations. Team Chosin conducted numerous deck landing qualifications, helicopter in-flight refuelings, and aircraft “Crash and Smash” firefighting drills to improve air and ship integration and flightdeck and aircrew proficiency. Additionally, the air department qualified all aircrew in night-vision

goggle shipboard operations and deck landings.

While at sea, the 27 members of Detachment Four are a self-contained aviation unit, comprised of the Chosin’s Air Department that is run by Officer-in-Charge, Lt. Cmdr. Sil Perrella. Detachment Four is a fully incorporated member of the Chosin team. This team completes a number of highly skilled tasks, which include Anti-Submarine Warfare; Anti-Surface Warfare; Search and Rescue; and a host of other essential missions.

“Bringing the ASW and ASUW capabilities of the SH-60B together with the LAMPS MKIII shipboard systems provides a much greater capability to the ESG commander than either system alone. The result is greater than the sum of the parts,” said Perrella while referencing the ever-present team concept.

The backbone of Detachment Four is its core of highly skilled maintenance technicians, lead by Aviation Electronics Technician Chief Travis Homewood. These maintainers are responsible for complex detachment-oriented preventative care and repair work for the multimillion-dollar helicopters from Detachment Four.

“The talent within the Air Department’s maintenance team is phenomenal. Their untiring perseverance and twenty-four-seven care and repair of the two aircraft were key to the forty-five mishap-free flight hours flown in our short nine days underway. The department successfully executed

every evolution as scheduled — a truly remarkable job for our first underway period,” said Perrella.

The next several months promise to be busy

ones for Detachment Four, as they continue to make meaningful contributions to the strike group and to the combined Global War on Terrorism.



Petty Officer Phillip A. Nickerson Jr.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Esmelin Villar, aviation warfare systems operator, assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light 37, inspects a sonobouy prior to the flight of his SH-60B Seahawk helicopter aboard the Hawaii-based guided-missile cruiser USS Chosin. Chosin and embarked HSL-37 are deployed to the region to conduct maritime security operations in the North Arabian Gulf.

CRIME, From A-1

decisions, such as drug and alcohol abuse. This information helps the children make an educated decision. Rather than just telling them what’s right and wrong, it shows them.

“If you just tell the children to say no, and they don’t know why, what’s keeping them from eventually just

finding out why?” asked DeWeerd.

Aiona and DeWeerd both say that crime prevention is not just for the young. It is imperative that adults learn how to better protect themselves as well.

“It’s the duty of every citizen, young and old, to do their best to prevent crime,” said Aiona.

For this reason, the MPs at MCB

Hawaii offer crime-prevention classes and even house walk-throughs for anyone who wants to learn how to better protect themselves, their families and their property.

“If the person wants to better protect their house and everything in it, we will come by and check out the house. We can give them pointers and show them the things they may

be doing wrong,” said DeWeerd.

Since October is Crime Prevention Month, the Military Police Department will be focusing on teaching the public about crime prevention. However, according to the MPs, they are willing to give crime-prevention classes whenever they’re requested. Those that want to take advantage of these services should

call 257-8556.

According to DeWeerd, all of these things are necessary to reduce crime, but the focus should be the children.

“If I teach one thousand children and nine hundred and ninety-nine of them choose a life of crime, but one listened to what I had to say,” said DeWeerd. Then it would have been worth it.”



Lance Cpl. Stephen Kwietniak

Pfc. Andrew Young, wireman, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Sacramento, Calif., digs out a fighting position at Camp Wilson, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

1/3, From A-1

enemy — and they will accomplish it all in the worst of terrain and weather conditions that make up this hostile desert environment.”

According to Master Gunnery Sgt. Carlos Craig, 1/3 operations chief and a native of Buffalo, N.Y., the time spent at Twentynine Palms will be as realistic to actual combat as possible.

“Throughout this exercise, we will simulate a battlefield environment by utilizing our firepower using close-air support, artillery and tanks — all the way down to small arms,” said Craig, a 26-year Marine veteran. “The reason we go to Twentynine Palms after mountain warfare training in Bridgeport is because not all of Afghanistan is mountainous. There’s a lot of flat, desert-like ground in country.

“We are covering all our bases, as we focus on our mission — to bring the enemy to a quick and decisive end.”

Part of covering those bases means getting the Marines ready, physically and mentally, for the rigors they will face in combat during their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan where they will serve in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“This will be my second tour in Afghanistan, and a big part of my responsibility is passing on my knowledge to the other Marines who haven’t been there yet,” said Lance Cpl. Jason Hyde, a 1/3 fire-team leader with Charlie Company. “The only pressure I feel is making sure we accomplish our mission and making sure my Marines make it back home to their families,” said the Spartanburg, S.C. native. “We are all getting into a combat mindset.”

Another Afghanistan veteran and 1/3 fire-team leader with Charlie Company, Pfc. Nicholas Long, a Charleston, S.C. native, said he knows where Hyde is coming from.

“It’s a big feeling of responsibility for myself and the other Afghanistan veterans,” admitted Long. “It’s our job not only to pass on the knowledge we’ve gained from previously fighting in Afghanistan, but, more importantly, to make sure it hits home and that our Marines understand. This is real — real bullets, real war, real consequences. Training hard and realistically now will save the lives of Marines later.”

The realistic training 1/3 Marines are experiencing during Mojave Viper includes the use nothing but live ammunition and live rounds.

“It’s all live fire out here,” said Lance Cpl. Christopher Sullivan, a 1/3 administrative clerk from Hyannis, Mass., who is making his first combat deployment. “You got rounds flying over your head, mortars striking within what feels like a few hundred meters, aircraft dropping ordnance, and also urban warfare environments. The Marines here are itching to get to Afghanistan, but we all realize how important it is to be exposed to this type of training, first.”

In addition to the arduous training regime, one of the hardships of training in a desert environment is the searing heat.

“It’s a lot hotter here than back home in Hawaii,” said Cpl. Jose GonzalezGonzalez, a 1/3 administrative clerk from Hillsboro, Ore. “It’s more than just the heat, though. It literally feels like the sun is burning your body. Then, you figure

we’ve got our flack jackets and Kevlars (helmets) on, our packs with all our gear on our backs, and our weapons to carry. It is not easy by any means, but you can see the Marines toughening up as time goes by. Your body eventually just gets used to it. After awhile, I guess it kind of feels like we can handle anything.”

This is exactly the type of response 1st Lt. Jerry Godfrey, 1/3 assistant logistics officer and a native of Miami, said he likes to hear.

“Every Marine here understands and has taken it upon himself to put forth a max effort out here,” said Godfrey. “We understand it’s not time to pat ourselves on the back,

yet. We still have four weeks of hard training left, but right now, the Marines are doing the right things, and I think it is going to be a very successful training evolution.”

When asked what he thought the most important aspect of the training that he wanted his Marines to take away from Mojave Viper,

Godfrey replied, “Brilliance in the basics.”

“We’re not going to ‘re-invent the wheel’ in Afghanistan,” said Godfrey. “Basic Marine warrior skills are what’s going to bring us victory, and it is what’s going to bring our boys back home alive. That’s what this training evolution is all about.”



Pfc. Michael S. Cifuentes

Marines with Delta Company, 1st Tank Battalion, gather around their respective tanks at the firing line at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center’s Range 500 training area, recently. The Marines of 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, will be working alongside tanks at Twentynine Palms as they take part in Mojave Viper, a live training exercise, in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

SKYLINE, From A-4

his head, and that even when wounded, he will keep going. He is an example to all Marines that intestinal fortitude is as powerful a device as any weapon issued to us. I'm proud to have him in Charlie Company, and I am proud to serve with him."

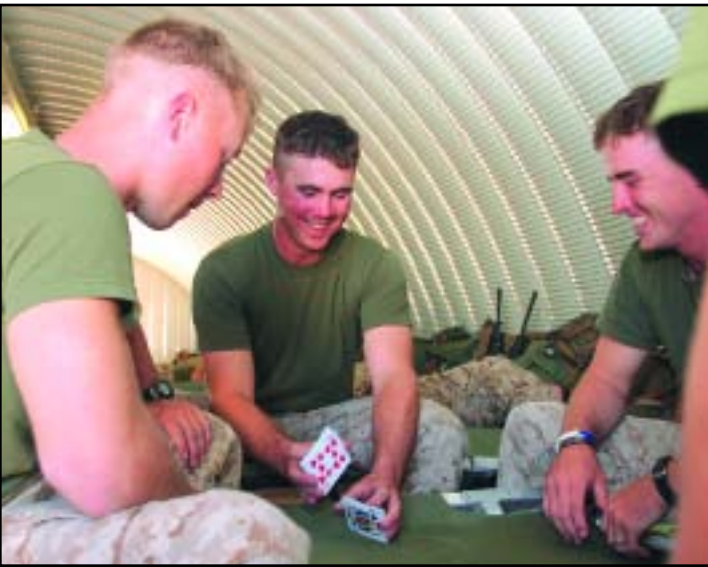
For his part, Snyder, despite his combat experience and numerous accolades, said he would never rest on his laurels.

"I lost a lot of good friends, good Marines, in Fallujah," said Snyder. "I feel like I have a responsibility to make sure as much as our guys come back from Afghanistan as possible, hopefully all of them, while still

getting the job done that we are being sent over there to do."

Because of his past experience in Afghanistan, Snyder said the mountain combat training 1/3 received earlier at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, Calif., and the desert field operations they are currently conducting at Twentynine Palms during the combined arms exercise phase of their training, is so important.

"I'm out here putting what I know to use and also learning a lot of new things," said Snyder. "You've always got to keep learning in the Marine Corps. The day you stop learning is the day it's time to pack your bags and get out."



Lance Cpl. Stephen Kwietniak

Lance Cpl. Justin Snyder, a 1/3 Charlie Company fire-team leader from Las Vegas, who was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds he sustained in Fallujah, Iraq, shuffles a deck of playing cards in preparation for a friendly game of spades with fellow Marines from Charlie Company during a break from training at Camp Wilson, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif.



Gift of life

Cpl. Rex Gonzalez, audit clerk, Inbound Section, Installation Personnel Administration Center, and sponsor of the IPAC blood drive, takes time from his normal day in order to donate blood to support the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Gonzalez has sponsored four blood drives this year, originally because his son was born premature and needed blood. He now supports others in need of blood by sponsoring blood drives, with the assistance of Tripler Army Medical Center personnel.

Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Did You Know?

This month in Marine Corps History

Oct. 1, 1997: The first African-American female colonel in the Marine Corps was promoted to that rank during a ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C. Col. Gilda A. Jackson, a native of Columbus, Ohio, made Marine Corps history when she achieved the rank of colonel. She was serving as Special Projects Officer, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing at the time of her promotion.

Oct. 5, 1775: Meeting in Philadelphia, Pa., the 2nd Continental Congress used the word "Marines" on one of the earliest known occasions, when it directed Gen. George Washington to secure two vessels on "Continental risque and pay," and to give orders for the "proper encouragement to the Marines and seamen" to serve on the two armed ships.

Oct. 6, 1945: Maj. Gen. Keller E. Rockey, commanding general, III Amphibious Corps, accepted the surrender of 50,000 Japanese troops in North China on behalf of the Chinese Nationalist government.

Oct. 8, 1899: A force of 375 Marines under command of future Commandant George F. Elliott, attacked and captured the insurgent town of Novaleta, Luzon, Philippine Islands, and linked up with U.S. Army troops. There were 11 Marine casualties.

Oct. 9, 1917: The 8th Marines was activated at Quantico, Va. Although the regiment would not see combat in Europe during World War I, the officers and enlisted men of the 8th Marines participated in operations against dissidents in Haiti for more than five years during the 1920s.

Pau

